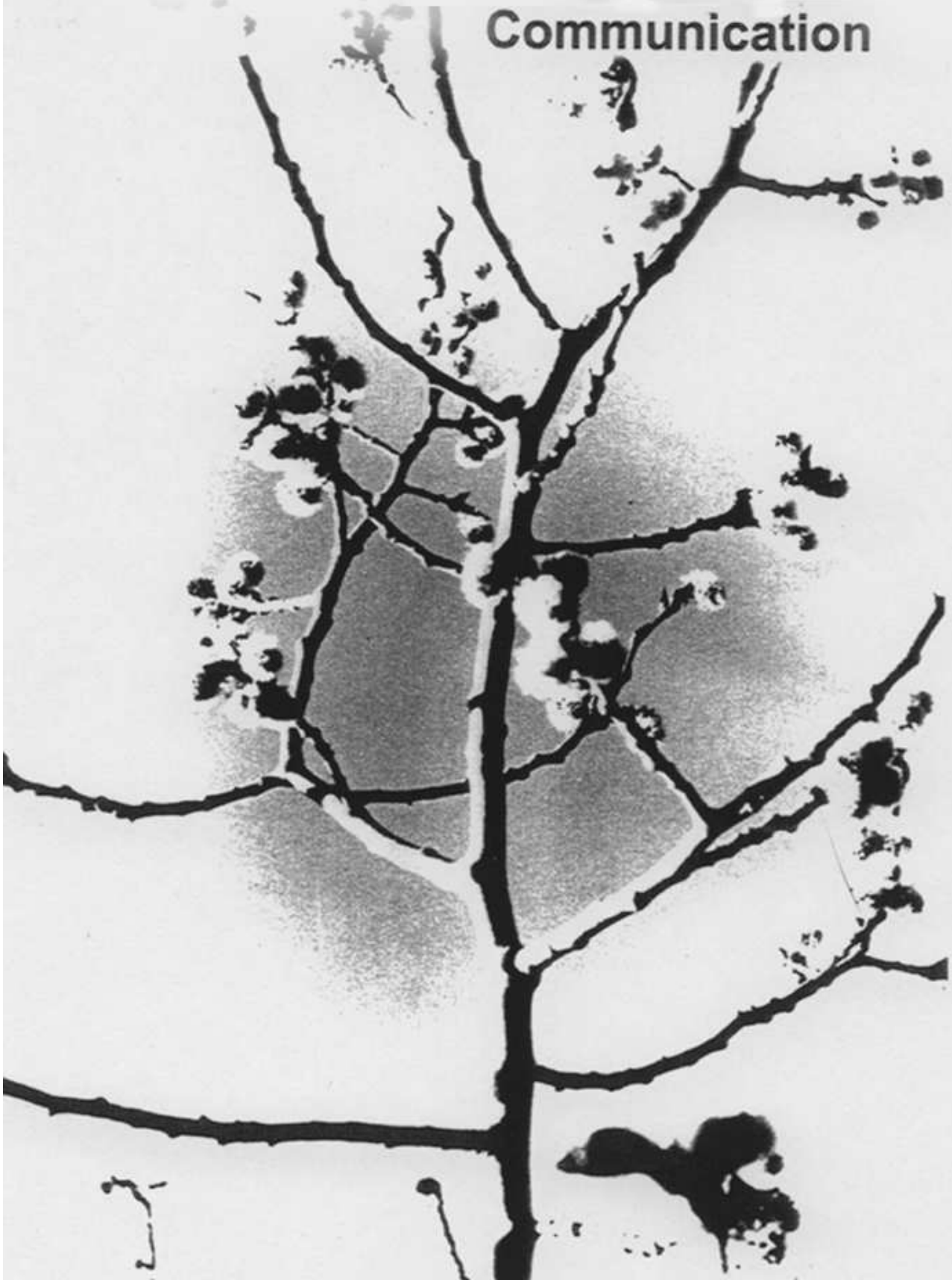


Written Communication



Sample Only

Written Communication

This section of the GAMSAT tests the candidate's facility with construction and relation of ideas in written form. There will be two 30 minute writing assignments, A and B. Each assignment involves a theme and presents five quotations that share a common subject affiliated with that theme. The first assignment, A, involves socio-cultural issues and requires analytical and argumentative writing while the second assignment, B, involves personal and social issues and calls for a writing style that is more reflective and discursive.

The analytical-argumentative essay response, A, examines in detail, or breaks down into components, a stated proposition in order to carefully examine its logic, comment upon its various parts, or extract its implicit arguments. It should have a crisp and clear style and lead the reader to a new level of clarity about the proposition. Whatever the contention of the proposition, having analysed its logic and meaning, endeavour to state the case both for and against that particular proposition and support such arguments with illustrative examples. Complete the essay by defining a set of criteria by which to judge the truth-value or applicability of the quotation.

The reflective-discursive essay, B, is really a number of variations on a theme implicit in or derived from a stated proposition. It should have a gentle and easy style and lead the reader to reflective thought about the proposition. To a large extent, the discursive essay should be experiential, raising points and issues with which both reader and writer share experience. The common experience of reader and writer serves, ultimately, as shared conviction. To this extent, no explicit argument need be made. This essay should begin with an analysis of the proposition, continue with an exchange of ideas about some chosen theme, and conclude with an insightful reflection or thoughtful query.

Written Communication is judged by two standards: 1) the quality of a candidate's thinking about a particular topic, and 2) their facility with written language in elaborating a topic. Facility with written language (effectiveness and fluency), while essential for good writing, is considered only to the degree that it affords effectiveness to the writing and is not assessed on its own merit. Candidates are being assessed on how they think and not on what they think.

At-Home Practice Essay B

Consider the following comment and develop a piece of writing in response to it.

Don't worry that your children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.

Haim Ginott.

At-Home Practice Response B

Don't worry that your children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.

Thesis: For children, actions speak louder than words.

Idea 1: Setting a good example trumps the imposition of infallible rules.

Idea 2: Parents should not demand good children, but instead display good adulthood.

As parents, we tend to be very concerned with giving our children a good start in life, and not allowing them to pick up bad or anti-social behaviours and habits that might stay with them for their adult life. This concern, after all, is at the heart of parenting. Further, parents tend to express this concern by instructing their children on how to live life – we scold our children for misbehaving and praise them for their successes and bright moments.

Ginott, however, in offering his thoughts on parenting, seems not to believe that either praise or scorn has quite the guiding effect parents like to think, and that perhaps a different approach is more appropriate. He recognizes that, first and foremost, the old truism “actions speak louder than words” is particularly true for young children. Children are less capable than adults of rational thought and argument, or learning by thinking, but are nevertheless very open-minded and receptive in their formative early years. As such, the lessons of the adult are rarely picked up consciously by the child, but rather more passively, through a process somewhat like osmosis – if wisdom is received, it is learnt from the actions, not the words of the parent.

For this reason parents should not be so concerned that their children never listen to them – this is, perhaps, to be expected. Rather than verbally teach the child the lessons we consider important, adults should concern themselves with the example they set in everyday life for their child for, as Ginott notes, whilst they may never listen, children are always watching their parents.

Parents should remember that, although we must often tell our children what to do, the most important factor in parenting is what we do, not what we tell our children to do. A parent who takes the approach of “do what I say, not what I do” is doomed to failure. Thus, in the combination of doing and saying, we must as parents place more emphasis on the former than the latter, though the latter has its role.

Perhaps parents can also learn a lesson about themselves and their children from Ginott's thoughts. Rather than expecting or hoping for our children to be perfect and setting about to pour our accumulated wisdom upon them to this end, we should recognize that they, like ourselves, will never be perfect. By attempting to

set a good example for children, rather than instructing them from a position of infallibility, parents must acknowledge their own failings, and therefore be more accepting of the failings of their children. The lessons of life cannot be learnt as a set of rules, articulated by the parent and followed precisely by the child, but rather they must come from a daily process of learning in which perfection is impossible but improvement is infinitely possible.

In taking this approach parents can, hopefully, raise happier and more flexible children, capable of themselves becoming better adults. In placing an emphasis on living life the right way, rather than telling others how to live their lives the right way, parents can instill children with the importance of taking responsibility for one's own actions. The crucial thing about young children is that, for this brief childhood, they are not responsible for their own actions. The lessons learned passively in childhood will remain with them, in part, throughout their adult life. As a result, parents must not tell their children how to be good children, but rather show them how to be good adults. In this way childhood can translate to a more balanced adulthood, in which the lessons of childhood emphasize the value of responsible, thoughtful and autonomous action, rather than holier-than-thou opinionating on the right way to live life.

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR WRITING TEST B

GAMSAT Section Score	≥ 70	64 – 69	60 – 63	56 – 59	52 – 55	≤ 51
Essay Grade	6	5	4	3	2	1
Depth & Breadth	Offers deep and broad consideration of the statement; exhibits excellent perception and clarity; original, interesting, or unique approach; includes apt and specific references, facts, and/or examples	Offers deep but constrained consideration of the statement; exhibits good perception and clarity; engaging approach; includes specific references, facts, and/or examples	Offers a consideration of the statement that is adequate but limited; clear and perceptive; somewhat interesting; includes references, facts, and/or examples	Offers a shallow and narrow, barely adequate consideration of the statement; somewhat clear but exhibits incomplete or confused thinking; dull, mechanical, overgeneralised	Significantly overlooks or misinterprets the theme, offers a flawed consideration of the statement; very little clarity; confusing; flawed logic	Very confusing or completely off the theme
Discursive Style	Meticulously examines the meaning and logic of the statement; establishes genuine rapport with the reader; reveals many nuances; offers exquisite insightful reflection	Carefully examines the meaning and logic of the statement; establishes less genuine rapport with the reader; reveals some nuances; offers notable insightful reflection	Consciously examines the meaning and logic of the statement; establishes good rapport with the reader; reveals some nuances; offers evident insightful reflection	Carelessly examines the meaning and logic of the statement; establishes artificial rapport with the reader; reveals few nuances; offers commonplace insightful reflection	Neglectfully examines the meaning and logic of the statement; establishes very spurious rapport with the reader; reveals few nuances; offers inconsequential insightful reflection	Fails to examine the meaning and logic of the statement; fails to establish rapport with the reader; fails to reveal nuances; fails to offer insightful reflection
Organisation & Development	Meticulously organised and thoroughly developed; coherent and unified	Well organised and developed; coherent and unified	Reasonably organised and developed; generally coherent and unified	Moderately organised and developed; some incoherence and lack of unity	Little or no organisation and development; incoherent and devoid of unity	No apparent organisation or development; incoherent
Word Choice & Sentence Construction	Effectively varied and engaging; virtually error free	Varied and interesting; a few errors	Adequately varied; some errors	Moderately varied and marginally interesting; one or more major errors	Little or no variation; dull and uninteresting; some major errors	Numerous major errors
Overall Impression	Demonstrates excellent command of the conventions of English; outstanding writing competence; thorough and effective; incisive	Demonstrates good command of the conventions of English; good writing competence; less thorough and incisive than the highest papers.	Demonstrates adequate command of the conventions of English; competent writing.	Demonstrates fair command of the conventions of English; some writing competency.	Demonstrates little command of the conventions of English; poor writing skills; unacceptably brief; fails to respond to the question.	Lacking skill and competence.

Sample Response B Grade: $(4 + 3 + 5 + 4 + 4)/5 = 4$